

The Christian News-Letter

Edited by
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DEAR MEMBER,

It is inevitable that in the Christian News-Letter major attention should be given to the larger movements and tendencies that concern the life of the Church and of society as a whole. There is seldom room to say much about the personal acts of faith and decision, in which the deepest meaning of Christianity resides, or the fruitful influences which proceed from individual to individual. These are local in nature and endless in number and variety; why mention one rather than another? But the picture which the News-Letter attempts to give would be out of focus if there were no occasional mention of them. I came across two articles recently in the *Chengtu News-Letter* which seem worth quoting as a reminder that throughout the world, even in the midst of war, the quiet processes of creative communication between person and person, by which the Christian leaven spreads, are going on all the time. The first of the two articles is by the Chinese Bishop of Western Szechwan in China:—

"I was called to preach a series of twelve sermons on the subject of 'The Power of Eternity and this Life,' in St. John's Church, Pi Fang Kai, Chengtu, last winter. When I was preaching my first sermon on Sunday morning, I saw a military leader walking into the church with some of his under-officers. They all sat down in one of the pews, and listened very attentively. After the service, they were invited to have a cup of tea and we were introduced to each other. I was told that the military leader was General Chang Tsi Chung. We had a chat together, and were attracted to each other at once. General Chang was very eager to learn the truth, and asked me whether I could give him a few hours a week for some weeks, apart from his attending our Sunday morning services. I told him that if he could come to my 'country hut,' which is fifteen li away in the country, I would be glad to study the Bible with him. He came on every Wednesday morning for six weeks without missing once. We studied the general outline of the whole Bible and also a few special books. General Chang was deeply touched. He told me that he would invite me to bear witness for Christ in Chungking this spring.

"Very soon I received a letter from General Chang, asking me very earnestly to go to Chungking. I stayed in Chungking about a month. I was in General Chang's house all the time. He gave me a great welcome on my arrival. A big tea party was arranged in his house. Marshall Feng (the Christian General) and a large number of important people in the Central Government came. It was a very happy time together. From this gathering a Bible reading fellowship was started. We met each night for an hour. We had more than forty before the fellowship was closed.

"But the best piece of personal work that one was called to do was the three times daily with the General and Lady Chang. In the morning, we studied the Bible and prayed together from seven to eight. In the noon, we had about half an hour together, reading and meditating. In the evening, we had about an hour. In the afternoon, General Chang and I went out to have a walk. It was a fine chance to discuss the subject together. From all these contacts I found that General Chang was gentle, thoughtful, humble and sincere. He had studied Christianity about ten years already, and knows a great deal of the truth.

"An account of this kind will never do justice to the reality. Such a lot of inspiration and deep feelings are stirred up in the depth of your being. Or you have had some great thoughts passing from one to another. Some friend asks you to write an account about it. All you can do is to say that you have had an hour of prayer or of reading with a certain man."

The second article is by a young Chinese who recently covered 1,700 miles on his bicycle, visiting the whole of the Szechwan Province, which is about the size of France. He visited four government universities, eighteen middle schools and many other schools, meeting in all with more than 11,000 students and pupils. He made eleven long trips, and the following extracts are from his account of his experiences.

"The most inspiring thing to me," he writes, "is that these eleven thousand and more young people are thirsting for Christ and willing to learn more about him. Many of them are learning to believe in him. Among them 110 have decided to join the Student Dedication Movement. Three young men and four girls have decided to join the ministry.

"My motto has been, 'If a man has faith, God will work wonders.' My faith began as a small mustard seed, but as time went on my faith was deepened, strengthened and enlarged.

"There were bandits on the way, but I was not frightened, for the Lord was with me. On the first day I rode westward sixty miles to Tsung Lai; next day I did another sixty miles. On the way I wrote twelve poems singing praises of the Almighty Lord.

"On the fourth trip my cycle broke on the first day and I was compelled to walk about forty miles in the blazing sun. When I arrived I dared not face the vermin in the village inn, and so sat through the night in meditation and with my books. The second day I had to push my bicycle again and walked about twenty-eight miles. So I enjoyed a baptism of fire (the pitiless sun) for two days. It rained on the third and fourth days. So I had a baptism of water. But arrived in Tze Chung, and was happy to find so many believers.

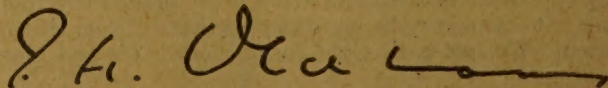
"Bandits were so many! But as the Lord was with me I was not a bit scared. I stopped at a village inn for the first night, but as I was unwilling to feed the vermin I bought some vegetable oil for my lamp for a dollar, and sat through the night reading St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, writing my poems, and writing eight long letters to friends far and near. Certainly I did enjoy that night!"

THE CHRISTIAN NEWS-LETTER

New regulations in regard to paper control compel a drastic reduction in the amount of paper used in the News-Letter. It is highly probable that we shall have to restrict ourselves to a fortnightly issue and to change our format. As an interim step the next issue of the News-Letter will not reach you for a fortnight. A full statement about future policy will be made then. We have every hope that a means can be found of achieving the purposes of the News-Letter in a changed form.

This week's Supplement is the outcome of group discussion among members of the Frontier Council. It has been submitted in draft to a number of people with expert knowledge of the subject, who have freely given their help, and while I alone am responsible for the final form, the substance of what is said expresses the mind of a good many others also.

Yours sincerely,



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